

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a batch of mailpieces~~mailpiece~~ using a mailing machine, the batch of mailpieces being held in a predetermined sequence in a plurality of containers, each container holding a predetermined portion of the batch of mailpieces, each mailpiece in the batch including information printed thereon that indicates sequence data of each mailpiece in the batch of mailpieces and postage data for determining a postage charge for the mailpiece, the information being printed in machine readable format, the method comprising:

scanning the information printed on~~receiving a mailpiece to obtain the sequence data of the mailpiece and the postage data for the mailpiece that includes representative data on a region of the mailpiece, the representative data being in machine-readable format;~~

~~obtaining image data of the mailpiece;~~

~~transmitting at least a portion of the image data to a storage location for subsequent use in tracking the mailpiece;~~

calculating the postage charge for the mailpiece based on~~data as a function of the postage data representative data obtained from the scanning the information printed on the mailpiece;~~

printing an indicia on the mailpiece that represents the~~calculated postage charged~~~~data;~~

~~generating a control signal as a function of the representative data; and~~

~~modifying operation of a mailing machine as a function of the control signal~~

determining if the sequence data for the mailpiece includes a container break indicator that signifies the mailpiece is a final mailpiece for a first container of the plurality of containers used to hold the batch of mailpieces;

if the sequence data does not include a container break indicator, depositing the mailpiece in the first container and accepting a next mailpiece for processing; and

if the sequence data does include a container break indicator, depositing the mailpiece in the first container and modifying operation of the mailing machine to deposit subsequent mailpieces in the batch of mailpieces into a second container of the plurality of containers used for holding the batch of mailpieces,

wherein the predetermined sequence of the batch of mailpieces and the predetermined portion of the batch of mailpieces in each of the plurality of containers is maintained.

2. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein modifying operation of thea mailing machine includes temporarily pausing operation of the mailing machine to allow the first container to be replaced by the second container.

3. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the information is printed in ~~representative data includes a barcode form.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the information~~representative data~~ is encoded.

5. Cancelled.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the information printed on the mailpiece~~representative data~~ uniquely identifies the mailpiece.

7. Cancelled.

8. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein calculating the postage charged~~data~~ further comprises:

adding a surcharge to thea postage charge~~amount~~ for the mailpiece to account for additional services specified for the mailpiece in the postage data included in the information printed on the mailpiece~~representative data.~~

Claims 9-12. Cancelled.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~AAn apparatus~~ mailing machine for processing a batch of mailpieces, the batch of mailpieces being held in a predetermined sequence in a plurality of containers, each container holding a predetermined portion of the batch of mailpieces, each mailpiece in the batch including information printed thereon that indicates sequence data of each mailpiece in the batch of mailpieces and postage data for determining a postage charge for the mailpiece, the information being printed in machine readable format, the mailing machine comprising:

means for scanning the information printed onreceiving a mailpiece to obtain the sequence data of the mailpiece and the postage data for the mailpiece~~that has representative data on a region of the mailpiece, the representative data being in machine-readable format;~~

~~means for obtaining image data of the mailpiece;~~

~~means for transmitting at least a portion of the image data to a storage location for subsequent use in tracking the mailpiece;~~

means for calculating the postage charge for the mailpiece based on~~data as a function of the postage data~~representative data obtained from scanning the information printed on the mailpiece;

means for printing an indicia on the mailpiece that represents the calculated postage charge~~data;~~

~~means for generating a control signal as a function of the representative data;~~
and

~~means for modifying operation of a mailing machine as a function of the control signal~~

means for determining if the sequence data for the mailpiece includes a container break indicator that signifies the mailpiece is a final mailpiece for a first container of the plurality of containers used to hold the batch of mailpieces;

means for depositing the mailpiece in the first container and accepting a next mailpiece for processing if the sequence data does not include a container break indicator; and

means for depositing the mailpiece in the first container and modifying operation of the mailing machine to deposit subsequent mailpieces in the batch of mailpieces into a second container of the plurality of containers used for holding the batch of mailpieces if the sequence data does include a container break indicator,

wherein the predetermined sequence of the batch of mailpieces and the predetermined portion of the batch of mailpieces in each of the plurality of containers will be maintained.

14. Cancelled.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the means for calculating the postage charged~~data~~ further comprises:

means for adding a surcharge to thea postage chargeamount for the mailpiece to account for additional services specified for the mailpiece in the postagerepresentative data included in the information printed on the mailpiece.

Claims 16-19. Cancelled.

20. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the means for modifying includes means for temporarily pausing operation of the mailing machine to allow the first container to be replaced by the second container.

21. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the information is printed in~~representative data includes a barcode form.~~

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the ~~representative data~~information is encoded.

23. Cancelled.

24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the ~~representative data~~information printed on the mailpiece uniquely identifies the mailpiece.

Claims 25-30. Cancelled.